

Reply to Office Action dated January 12, 2007

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the Abstract is amended to correct informalities. No new matter is added. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims, and the drawings. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action indicated that Declaration is of insufficient clarity. A better copy of the Declaration is provided herewith. Accordingly, the objection should be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Great Britain Patent No. GB 2,225,793 (hereinafter "GB '793"), in view of Noguchi et al. (hereinafter "Noguchi"), U.S. Patent No. 5,353,612, JP 08-318091 (hereinafter "JP '091"), and Tingle, U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0046789. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a filter cover assembly for a washing machine and recites a cover fitted to a filter hole provided at a cabinet of the washing machine for loading/unloading a filter. Independent claim 1 further recites three protrusions extending downward from left, right, and central sides of a lower end of the cover to be inserted into holes at left, right, and central portions of a lower side of a filter case provided in the cabinet, respectively, to communicate with the filter hole, and three hooks protruding from left, right, and central sides of an upper end of the cover toward the filter case to be inserted in hook holes at left, right, and central portions of an upper side of the filter case, respectively. Independent claims 5 and 9 recite similar features.

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The Office Action acknowledges that “GB ‘793 does not specifically teach three hooks and three protrusions (the document teaches two of each) and the construction of the hooks as claimed.” The Examiner then concludes that “[i]t would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide any number of hooks and protrusions in the cover of GB 225793 to ensure a proper closure of the cover.” The Examiner then asserts the teachings of Noguchi, JP ‘091, and Tingle, as teaching the specific construction and shape of the hooks and protrusions, and concludes that “[i]t would have been obvious to an ordinary artisan at the time the invention was made to incorporate the hooks and protrusions of Noguchi et al., JP 08-318091 and Tingle in GB 2225793 for their conventional purpose with reasonable expectation of adequate results in order to provide reliable closure for the cover disclosed by the GB document and in order to use less expensive materials.”

However, GB ‘793 discloses a flap for a washing machine filter. The flap includes flat plate 6. A U-shaped element 10 may be removably coupled to the flat plate 6, and includes pins/projections 16, 17, 23, 26, 27, all of which are formed in side portions of the flap. The flap 6 pivots about the pins 26, 27. Thus, GB ‘796 does not disclose or suggest any, much less three, protrusions extending downward from left, right, and central portions of a lower end of the cover, or any, much less three, hooks protruding from left, right, and central sides of an upper end of the cover, nor do any of the applied secondary references.

Further, there is no motivation provided in any of GB ‘793, Noguchi, JP ‘091, or Tingle for the Examiner’s proposed combination. Additionally, GB ‘793 discloses a two piece filter

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cover, including flat plate 6 and U-shaped element 10, and the design is configured to rotate on pins 26 and 27. Modifying GB '793 as suggested by the Examiner to replace any of pins/projections 16, 17, 22, 23, 26, 27 with any of the specific construction and shape of the hooks and protrusions taught by GB '793, Noguchi, JP '091, or Tingle would destroy GB '793 for its intended function.

Furthermore, as indicated in the specification with respect to the features disclosed in the present application, since three protrusions and hooks fix lower and upper ends of the filter cover, the filter cover assembly can be securely loaded in the filter hole of the cabinet of a washing machine. Additionally, since three protrusions and hooks fix the lower and upper ends of the filter cover, there is no step difference between the outer surfaces of the cover and the cabinet, improving the exterior beauty of the washing machine. Thus, the specific number of hooks and protrusions in the claimed features of independent claims 1, 5, and 9 solve a specific problem not addressed in the applied prior art.

Finally, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's piece meal reconstruction of the claimed features of independent claims 1, 5, and 9 using four different references is evidence that the Examiner's proposed combination is based on impermissible hindsight gleaned from Applicants' own disclosure.

Accordingly, the rejection of independent claims 1, 5, and 9 over GB '793, Noguchi, JP '091, and Tingle should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 2-4, 6-8, and 10-12 are allowable over GB '793, Noguchi, JP '091, and Tingle at least for the reasons discussed above with respect to

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independent claims 1, 5, and 9, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,


Carol L. Drizbick
Registration No. 40,287

P.O. Box 221200
Chantilly, Virginia 20153-1200
(703) 766-3777 CLD/kah:tlg

Date: May 7, 2007

Please direct all correspondence to Customer Number 34610